

Tuacahn High School for the Performing Arts 1100 North Tuacahn Drive Ivins, Utah 84738

February 6, 2007





Utah State Office of Education 250 East 500 South P.O. Box 144200 Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

THE REPORT OF THE VISITING TEAM REVIEWING

Tuacahn High School for the Performing Arts 1100 North Tuacahn Drive Ivins, Utah 84738

February 6, 2007

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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State Superintendent of Public Instruction

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FOREWORD

The major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate school growth and improvement so as to increase student achievement.

In these efforts, the school staff makes a comprehensive evaluation of the school's programs, operations, and results. The school determines how actual practices align to stated objectives and resulting outcomes. It is a three-phased evaluation: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, February 6, 2007, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to increase student achievement.

The entire staff of Tuacahn High School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the visiting team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Bill Fowler is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Tuacahn High School for the Performing Arts, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more dramatically increase student achievement at Tuacahn High School.

Patti Harrington, Ed.D. State Superintendent of Public Instruction

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^{**} CMAC Representative Appointment

TUACAHN HIGH SCHOOL FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

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TUACAHN HIGH SCHOOL FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

School Administration

William (Bill) Fowler	Principal
	Vice-Principal
Jan Shelton-Hunsaker	Vice-Principal/ Artistic Director

Counseling

Support Staff

Jana Houston	Business Manager
Heather Carroll	Administrative Assistant
Patti Winkler	Librarian
Martha Heuer	Counseling Assistant
Erica Hudson	Special Ed. Aide
Kay Casper	EDNET Facilitator
Jody Lounsbury	

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TUACAHN HIGH SCHOOL FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Tuacahn High School for the Performing Arts is to create an unparalleled environment where students can maximize their potential academically and artistically. Tuacahn High School is committed to partnering with faculty, home and community to make our school a world-class educational experience

BELIEF STATEMENTS

- 1. We believe that **all students can learn**, grow, create and contribute to the school and society.
 - 2. We believe that **innovative**, **dynamic and rigorous curricula** will help our students develop their abilities, talents and minds to support **life-long learning**.
- 3. We believe that **small class sizes** enhance opportunities for academic excellence and promote individualized instruction, which enhances our **commitment to college preparation and placement**.
 - 4. We believe that by creating a love for the performing arts in our students, we have broadened the field of activities that our students will have to choose from in their lifetime, thus expanding their quality of life.
- 5. We believe that the performing arts generate a kinship between our students and their audience that **promotes confidence**, **self-worth and ownership in the school community**.
- 6. We believe that **communication and cooperation** between our Board of Education, parents, administrators, teachers and students is vital to our success.

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Dr. Roy L. Hoyt, Hurricane High School, Washington School District, Visiting Team Chairperson

Laurie Anderson, Tooele Junior High School, Tooele School District

VISITING TEAM REPORT

TUACAHN HIGH SCHOOL FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Tuacahn High School for the Performing Arts opened its doors for the first time on August 23, 1999. As Utah's first charter high school, Tuachan High School is an extension of the dream of the founders of the Tuacahn Center for the Performing Arts. The school combines a rigorous college preparatory program with intensive instruction in the performing arts of music, dance, and drama. Beginning with the academic year 2001-2002, Tuacahn expanded to include ninth grade students.

Enrollment at Tuachan High School has continued to grow since the school's inception, and during the 2005-2006 school year it reached its capacity of 200 students. There are 13 teachers on staff. The school has one principal and one assistant, as well as an artistic director. While the majority of students come from the Washington County area, the school attracts students from all over Utah and beyond. To date, every graduating class at Tuachan High School has sent a substantial majority of its members on to higher education. In the six years it has been in operation, Tuachan High School has won or placed in the top three in virtually every performing arts competition or event available to the school. Though its numbers classify it as a 1A school, its students compete in the 3A division.

Extracurricular activities are an integral part of Tuachan High School. Every student is required to participate in at least one extracurricular activity each year in order to graduate in his or her academy. Ninety-eight percent of Tuachan High School's students participated in more than two extracurricular activities during the 2006-2007 school year. The performing arts are an integral part of Tuachan High School culture. Students produce and perform in a minimum of three theatrical productions each year.

a) What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?

Through the self-study process, Tuachan High School took a critical look at student achievement in the report's analysis of the available standardized test scores. The school reviewed scores from the past five years. Test scores show that Tuachan High School students' scores are similar to those of other public high schools in the immediate area. It is notable that for a college prep school, only 52 percent of students have taken the ACT over the last two years. Fee waivers constitute five percent of enrolled students at Tuachan High School. Also notable is that two-thirds of the student body is female, and one-third male.

b) What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?

The school needs to make a concerted effort to collect data for the purpose of driving instructional decisions. The school has collected much of this data (end-of level, Stanford, CRTs, and UBSCT) critical for informed decisions; however, use of this information could be more comprehensive in relation to classroom and school-wide decision making.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- Investigate strategies that will support instruction within the new schedule the school will adopt for the 2007-2008 school year.
- Examine patterns of low-performing students based on standardized and classroom-based assessments.
- The school has identified other areas to study, including (1) the correlation between GPA and credit earned, (2) which groups enter the school behind in credit, (3) discrepancies between GPA, credit earned, and attendance, and (4) honors awards and performances that can be used to adequately assess the standards by which the school judges its performing arts department.

CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

a) To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?

Two years ago the school formed an accreditation leadership team for the school analysis. The team utilized a collaborative process to develop/review the school's mission statement, departmental analysis, focus groups, and action plan. Although there are only two of the original teachers from the previous accreditation, the school has worked hard to include new members of the faculty in the improvement process. Parents and students have also been included through focus groups and surveys.

b) To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?

The staff has embraced the concept of continual improvement. Information in the self-analysis provides evidence of the challenges facing Tuacahn High School in relation to being a performing arts school. The self-analysis also shows the

school's strength in providing smaller classes and numerous opportunities to perform and engage in service learning, as well as the school's ability to respond to the needs of students.

CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Tuacahn High school's desired results for student learning are as follows:

- Pursue post-high school academic and artistic experiences.
- Long-term confidence through academic and artistic achievement and discipline.
- Complex thinking and skills.
- Artistic citizenship and arts advocacy.

Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:

- a) To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?
 - The Tuacahn High School leadership team has made an effort to involve parents, students, teachers, and administration through the process of self-analysis. The school's small size, combined with teachers and administration who consider themselves to be innovative, allowed the school community to examine processes, policies, and programs.
- b) To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?
 - The Visiting Team found, through interviews with teachers and administration, that there has been significant progress towards school improvement. A challenge to the school is the high rate of staff turnover. This will require continued collaboration in order to institutionalize the school's mission statement, DRSLs, and beliefs.
- c) To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?

The School DRSLs align directly to the beliefs and mission statement. These beliefs reflect the community's desire for students to become lifelong learners, be prepared for higher learning, and have a love for the performing arts. The Visiting Team recommends that a more measurable means be developed to better assess the achievement of the DRSLs by students.

Curriculum Development:

a) To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?

Teachers expressed their willingness to teach the State Core standards. The Visiting Team did not notice evidence of teachers using Utah Life Skills, nor are these evident in the desired results for student learning. Teachers meet weekly as a group to discuss curriculum issues, both positive and negative. Life skills issues could be discussed at this time.

b) To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?

The faculty at Tuachan High School has begun conversations on how to explicitly teach the desired results for student learning. Some teachers stated that they are teaching their subject matter while incorporating the DRSLs; others are not. While desired results for student learning have been identified, the staff must outline how they will be taught in individual classes across the content areas. The Visiting Team recommends that the staff members work to implement DRSLs into their respective curricula and to develop a means of measuring desired outcomes.

Quality Instructional Design:

a) To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?

The Visiting Team observed a variety of instructional methods to engage students. Student/teacher discussions were observed. Teachers used guided note-taking papers to supplement PowerPoint presentations and lectures. Teachers used "bell ringers" to review or introduce topics for the day's instruction. The Visiting Team observed the music teacher using clapping methods to help students learn the rhythm of a challenging song. Teachers utilized current technology to supplement instruction. The art teacher had students critique their paintings focusing on proper art vocabulary and technique. The Drama Department had a guest lecturer

to teach students makeup skills. A survey of teachers also indicated that they employed various pedagogical methods in their instruction.

b) To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?

It was evident to the Visiting Team that teachers were conscious of the need to vary activities and instructional strategies to meet the needs of the individual students within the classroom.

c) To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?

The school provides opportunities for students to improve and enrich their learning through expanded uses of time, facilities, and instructional resources, and through collaborative networks of support within the school, at home, and across the community. The school has over 20 after-school clubs to choose from. The Visiting Team talked with students who indicated that the average student will be involved in at least two or three of these after-school groups.

Quality Assessment Systems:

a) To what extent has the staff developed classroom or school-wide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?

Assessments are directly linked to specific instruction that promotes students' achievement and provides continuous improvement of their learning. For example, the Visiting Team observed the art teacher asking students to critique their own work. The Math Department is also encouraging other departments to use ACT test language so that students are more familiar with it when they take multiple-choice tests. The Visiting Team noticed teachers using quizzes, bell ringers, and book assignments to assess student learning. A teacher survey indicated that teachers at Tuachan High School provide a comprehensive sample of student performance that is sufficient in scope to allow the school to make reasonable conclusions about student achievement.

b) To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?

The Visiting Team observed that most assessments used during the visit were directly linked to specific instructional uses that promote student achievement and their continued improvement. Assessments observed by the Visiting Team included oral presentations, open-ended questions, student critique, student journals, performance tasks, debate, and quizzes.

It was observed that selected teachers have clearly defined performance standards and have attempted to align appropriate assessment instruments to those performance standards. This was not the case with all teachers. The staff is encouraged to continue its efforts to develop a procedure to concisely identify performance standards and tie appropriate assessment instruments to those standards.

b) To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?

The students at Tuachan High School were very positive about what they were learning and aware of the expectations and grading policies of each teacher; they felt that they were assessed fairly.

Leadership for School Improvement:

- a) To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?
 - The level of the school's commitment to improving student learning is clearly high. The school has established a positive and strong learning environment in which learning and teaching are a priority.
- b) To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?
 - Most decisions are aligned with the school's mission, beliefs, and goals. Teachers, parents, and students feel they have had a meaningful opportunity to contribute to the direction of the school. Some of the school's instructional decisions have been made according to the information gleaned from surveys and focus groups. The Visiting Team encourages the school leadership to extend and refine data to better inform subsequent action steps.
- c) To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?
 - The school's monitoring of student progress at Tuachan High School should be a priority. Continued assessment of instructional practices will be necessary to achieve the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to facilitate student learning. It is recommended that the school develop a comprehensive means of assessing instructional effectiveness.

d) To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?

The leadership at Tuachan High School provides skillful stewardship of the school. Most of the school-wide policies and operational procedure are consistent with the school's beliefs and mission and are designed to maximize opportunities for successful learning.

e) To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?

The allocation and use of resources are aligned with the school's goals.

f) To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?

The school actively engages parents and families as partners in the learning process through a variety of programs, resources, and instructional materials. The administration is encouraged to continue developing the expertise of the faculty in employing data-driven and research-based decision making that will serve to enhance school improvement over the long term.

Community Building:

a) To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?

The Visiting Team recognizes the positive and productive working relationships established by Tuachan High School among students, teachers, support staff, and administrators. There is strong evidence that Tuachan High School educators are successful in creating and sustaining a learning environment for students that nurtures a sense of caring and belonging. The Visiting Team was impressed with the variety of programs affording students an opportunity be involved in a variety of extension programs and extracurricular activities. Many and varied support programs are in place for students who may need extra help and services.

b) To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?

The school engages parents and families in the learning process. The Visiting Team notes that the school has worked to develop positive relationships with the City of Ivins, Tuacahn Center for the Arts, Rotary International, and several other

organizations and businesses in the community that have provided service and opportunities for students to learn and grow.

Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:

a) To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?

The school's organizational system and culture are supportive of school improvement and professional development. The staff of Tuachan High School is committed to providing students with the opportunities necessary to achieve their potential. To this end, staff members are actively engaged in professional development to strengthen their skills.

The school administration supports staff members in their professional growth by providing strong professional development within the school and giving teachers the resources to take advantage of opportunities outside of the school.

b) To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?

The school administrators recognize collaboration among staff members as an important component of the conditions necessary to support productive change and continuous improvement. They are also aware of the constraints a smaller faculty and facility create in meeting this goal. Therefore, the school administration has made a concerted effort to provide activities and opportunities for all staff members to interact and collaborate with each other.

The Visiting Team commends the commitment made by the school administration and staff to engage as a community of learners. The Visiting Team recommends that the school administration continue to find and create opportunities for collaboration between departments.

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) STANDARDS I-XI

Standard I – Educational Program

This standard is met. Tuacahn High School's instructional and organizational practices, as well as its policies and procedures, support the desired results for

student learning and prepare students to succeed in a culturally diverse, democratic society.

Standard II – Student Personnel Services

This standard is met. Student personnel services are designed to give systematic assistance to students. The assigned personnel for guidance includes a minimum of one full-time person for each 400 students enrolled.

Standard III – School Plant and Equipment

This standard is met. The school plant provides a variety of instructional activities and programs and incorporates aesthetic features that contribute to a positive educational atmosphere.

Standard IV - Library Media Program

This standard is met. The school library media program is a primary resource for literacy, information, and curriculum support. A certified library media teacher provides instruction, resources, and activities to promote independent use of ideas and information

Standard V - Records

This standard is met. Student records are maintained, handled, and protected in the best interests of students and parents. Students and parents have the right to access personal student records and are ensured the privacy of such, as guaranteed by federal legislation.

Standard VI – School Improvement (This is addressed in the self-study.)

This standard is met. The school improvement plan focuses on the total school rather than each of the separate components within the school.

Standard VII – Preparation of Personnel

This standard is met. All professional personnel are in compliance with the licensing requirements of the state of Utah and are properly endorsed for the subjects they are assigned.

Standard VIII - Administration

This standard is met. The administration of Tuacahn High School provides educational leadership, supervises and coordinates programs, and carries out the necessary administrative procedures.

Standard IX - Teacher Load

This standard is met. The total number of students instructed by any one teacher in any one grading period does not exceed numbers set by the Utah State Office of Education and/or Northwest.

Standard X – Activities

This standard is met. Tuacahn High School supports a range of activities that supplement the basic instructional program by providing additional experiences and opportunities for learning to take place.

Standard XI – Business Practices

This standard is met. The school is financially responsible. Proper budgetary procedures and generally accepted accounting principles are followed for all school funds. The school's advertising and promotional literature are completely truthful and ethical.

CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

a) To what extent is the school-wide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?

Upon review of the school profile and completion of the site visit, including interviews with the critical stakeholders, the Visiting Team is confident that the school-wide action plan adequately addresses the critical areas for follow-up. The school profile, department reports, and focus groups provided the school with accurate information for areas of growth, and the accreditation leadership team and school staff have written a reasonable action plan to address these areas.

The Visiting Team believes that the strong leadership provided by the school principal will also contribute to the school's success in implementing the plan. The Visiting Team recommends that the school provide realistic time lines and actions to assist in the implementation of the action plan.

b) To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, school-wide and system-wide?

The school leadership team has done an effective job of including all stakeholders in the accreditation process. The Visiting Team had many opportunities to meet with school administrators, teachers, counselors, students, and parents. The school community was open to suggestions and committed to refining the action plan to

address the recommendations made by the Visiting Team. The Visiting Team is confident that the school leadership will implement the school's action plan and the recommendations of the Visiting Team.

c) How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the school-wide action plan appear to be?

The Visiting Team is confident that the school leadership is committed to the continuous improvement process and understands that decisions need to be based on data. As the members of the school leadership team refine and better define the DRSLs and action plans, they understand the importance of making modifications based on an ongoing analysis of the data.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends Tuacahn High School for creating a culture that is conducive to a positive learning environment. Students feel safe and valued by the staff of the school.
- The Visiting Team commends Tuacahn High School for providing students with a wide array of learning experiences. Most students were engaged in learning through several types of learning activities.
- The Visiting Team commends Tuacahn High School for being responsive to parent and teacher input. Concerns are addressed and, where reasonable, changes are made. Communication among parents, students, teachers, and the administration has improved over the past year.
- The Visiting Team commends Tuacahn High School staff for its high level of commitment. Because of the nature of the charter school, most teachers work long hours to fulfill the mission of the school.
- The Visiting Team commends Tuacahn High School for maximizing limited space. The facilities are clean and well maintained.

Recommendations:

• The Visiting Team recommends enlarging, disaggregating, and analyzing current data regarding implementation of the school improvement plan.

- The Visiting Team recommends that the school modify the action plan to reflect a six-year improvement plan. The current action plan timelines indicate one to two years for most goals.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the Parent Teacher Organization, Board of Directors, and administration address issues of governance in the decisionmaking process.
- The Visiting Team recommends that the school develop a comprehensive assessment system using researched-based data to inform subsequent instruction and instructional practices.